



The Concordia University Chair in Canadian Jewish Studies



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The Concordia University Chair in Canadian Jewish Studies is dedicated to the study of the Canadian Jewish experience. Through research and education, the Chair supports a wide range of projects of local, national, and international interest, which contribute to this growing field of inquiry. Together with the Concordia University Institute for Canadian Jewish Studies, the Chair provides a bridge between the academic study of Canadian Jewry and the community that it serves. The Chair, responsible for the academic study of Canadian Jewry, and the Institute, responsible for community activities, represent an unprecedented partnership.

The Focus

- Providing academic courses for undergraduate and graduate students. In addition, the Chair is committed to providing resources, learning and other culturally enriching experiences within the Jewish community and its institutions.
- Undertaking scholarly research in all areas of Canadian Jewish Studies. The Chair will also engage in projects to be established in conjunction with the community's organizations in an effort to support the development of policy and programmes.
- Offering public lectures and seminars which utilize both Concordia University and off-campus venues. Connecting Canadian students with academic and creative figures from abroad through exchanges and visiting scholar programs.

The Challenge

The idea to create a Chair in Canadian Jewish Studies at Concordia galvanized the energies of many scholars and members of the Jewish community who shared a desire to provide the Jewish community in Canada with an academic seat for the study of its history and a place where aspects of its future could be explored.

Concordia University in Montreal is the ideal place to locate a Chair which will promote the study of the Canadian Jewish community. This initiative creates a connection between the scholars studying Canadian Jewry and the members of the Jewish community.

Canada's Jewish communities represent a relatively small yet tremendously vibrant part of the Canadian mosaic. Members of these communities have influenced

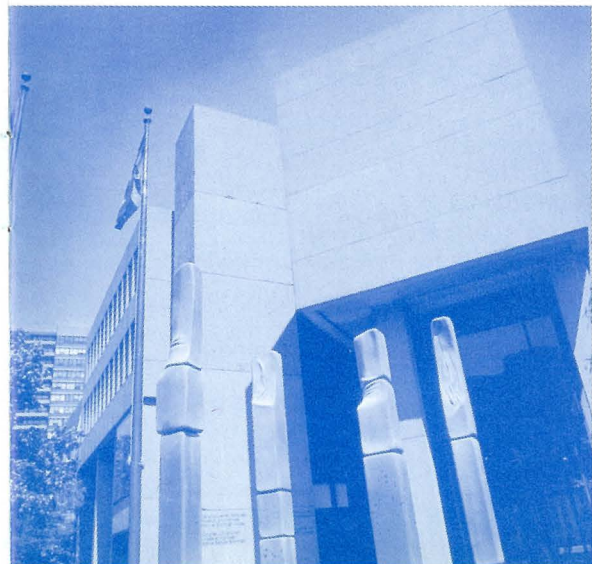
virtually every aspect of society, from business through culture and education to international affairs, medicine and science. Yet Canada's rich and diverse Jewish heritage is not well known, even within Jewish communities themselves.

The fact of living in freedom, in an open and culturally diverse environment, itself presents unique and perplexing challenges. These stories and records will only be revealed and developed through creative cooperative efforts of all facets of the community. The Chair's mission is to meet these challenges.

The Site

Concordia University has been recognized by the Canadian government's Department of Multiculturalism as the ideal site in Montreal for a Chair in Canadian Jewish Studies. Concordia has pioneered in both ethnic studies and multidisciplinary approaches. It has set the standard for research into the different cultural entities that constitute the Canadian landscape.

Situating the Chair at Concordia has attracted an extensive and impressive group of scholars at Concordia, from a wide range of disciplines. They now focus on the study of Canadian Jewry from an exciting combination of perspectives including: Canadian Jewish History and Literature, Holocaust survivors, Gender Studies, communal institutions, immigration patterns, identity formation and religious variance.



The Department of Religion is one of the most dynamic at Concordia University. Within the Province of Quebec, Concordia enrolls more students in Religious Studies than all other similar university programmes, anglophone or francophone, combined. It is internationally noted for its comparative approach to the study of religion. The Department of Religion has achieved a national and international reputation for the quality of its faculty, their distinguished record of research and the students it trains. The program of Jewish Studies, situated within the Department of Religion is an ideal home for the Chair as it unites the strengths of the Department of Religion and the University as a whole.

In 1999 Concordia University reached an agreement with Canadian Jewish Congress to occupy the Samuel Bronfman building on rue Dr. Penfield. This will allow the Institute to be housed near Concordia University's downtown campus in a building which has a long history of Jewish community service. Most importantly, the building houses the Canadian Jewish Congress Archives, providing scholars and students with the most thorough documentation of Jewish life in the country. Our location offers easy access to Concordia students and to the Jewish and academic communities.

Chair, Norman Ravvin

Norman Ravvin is a critic, fiction writer, teacher and journalist. His essays on Canadian and American Jewish literature are collected in *A House of Words: Jewish Writing, Identity, and Memory*. His novel, *Café des Westens*, and his short story collection, *Sex, Skyscrapers, and Standard Yiddish*, address questions of Jewish identity in Canadian, American, and European contexts. Before joining the Concordia faculty he taught literature and creative writing at the Universities of Toronto and New Brunswick before coming to Montreal.



The Chair and the Jewish Community

Long noted for its courses off campus, and for its welcoming attitude to mature and auditing students, Concordia University is a pioneer in Adult Jewish education. The Concordia University Chair in Canadian Jewish Studies enhances Concordia's continuing outreach to the Jewish community by increasing communal interaction and programming. The goals of this program are to work together with community leaders in order to expand and deepen Canadian and especially Quebec Jewry's awareness of and interest in their own history and accomplishments.

The Concordia University Institute for Canadian Jewish Studies

Complimenting the Chair's academic activities, the Chair has also established a community-based Institute which will work closely with the Montreal, Quebec and Canadian Jewish communities to fill their cultural and research needs. The Institute has been generously funded by Charles and Andrea Bronfman and the Seagram Company Ltd. with the clear mandate to serve the Jewish community through a variety of initiatives including:

- Scholarships and Internships for undergraduate and graduate students working in the area of Canadian Jewish studies
- Public lectures (by Concordia faculty members and by distinguished visiting lecturers invited from elsewhere)
- Study groups and workshops
- Conferences
- Symposia
- Scholars-in-residence for various arms of the Jewish community



Programs

The Chair brings together the resources of a variety of departments at Concordia University through research, teaching, scholarships and internships.

Research: Concordia University's commitment to interdisciplinary and innovative research is reflected in the Chair's research activities. The Chair supports comprehensive research in all areas of Canadian Jewish Studies through interdisciplinary research methods. Some of these areas include Holocaust Studies, Memoirs, Literature, Women's Experience, History, as well as the study of the diverse cultural traditions that make up the Canadian Jewish experience. Recent major research projects include "Iraqi Jewish Immigration and Ethnic Identity", "Constitutional Documents of Canadian Jewish Organizations" as well as "Holocaust Survivors in Canada: An Annotated Bibliography".

Teaching: The Chair is extremely fortunate to benefit from the exceptional resources provided by Concordia University's internationally recognized faculty members. The faculty bring not only a variety of teaching methods and experiences to the study of Canadian Jewry, but also a wealth of diverse life experiences to their teaching.

Undergraduate and graduate students interested in Canadian Jewish Studies are able to draw on the remarkable resources of the departments and programs of: Religion, Judaic Studies, History, English, Classics, French, Sociology and Anthropology. Through these various departments, Concordia University offers many innovative courses relevant to the study of Canadian Jewry.

- The Canadian Jewish Experience
- Jewish Identity in Quebec
- Jewish Women in North America
- Judaism and Religious Pluralism
- Sociology and History of Genocide
- The Jewish American Novel
- Canadian Jewish Writers
- Literature of the Holocaust
- Sephardic Judaism
- History and Sociology of Genocide
- Introduction to the History of the Holocaust
- Modern Jewish Identity
- The Impact of the Holocaust

Scholarships and Internships

Through the Institute, the Chair offers scholarships and internships to graduate students working in the area of Canadian Jewish Studies. Doctoral scholarships valued at up to \$10,000 and Master's level scholarships valued at up to \$5,000 are awarded annually. Scholarships are awarded on the basis of academic excellence and innovative research. Internships, valued at up to \$3,000, to be held at various Jewish community institutions and organizations, are also available. The purpose of these internships is to provide work experience for students while benefiting community organizations. Those interested in applying for these grants should contact the Chair at the Department of Religion for information about academic requirements and deadlines.

Ongoing projects include:

Publication Series: The Chair, in partnership with Red Deer Press and the University of Calgary, will support an imprint, edited by Norman Ravvin, which will publish volumes dedicated to Canadian Jewish Studies. The first joint project will be a collection of short stories by Canadian Jewish writers, due out in 2001.

Web Site: On our web site you will find comprehensive information about the Chair and its activities. The Chair's publication series is available to view and download. In addition, the web site includes links to invaluable Canadian Jewish resources on the Internet and a selected bibliography for Canadian Jewish Studies. The site address is www.concordia.ca/jchair

Documentaries: The Chair continues to work with scholars and the community to develop resources for the study of Canadian Jewry. An example of this effort is the Chair's joining with Multiculturalism/Heritage Canada in supporting and producing a documentary video, "Untying the Bonds of Jewish Divorce", which focuses on the unique divorce legislation in Canada. Associate Professor Norma Baumele Joseph, of Concordia University's Department of Religion, is one of the producers and writers of the video. This video along with a study guide explains the problems of Jewish divorce and clarifies the ways in which the Canadian legislative and judiciary systems have responded to help the Jewish community.

Lectures and Seminars: Each year, the Chair invites a select number of esteemed scholars to come to Concordia University to present public lectures and convene seminars with graduate students. Past lectures have included presentations by Nathalie Zemon Davis, Gerald Tulchinsky, Sybil Milton, Paula Draper, Haim Avni, and Fraidie Martz.

Conferences: Through a grant from Multiculturalism Canada/Heritage Canada, The Chair, in conjunction with York University's Chair in Canadian Jewish Studies, has held two vital international conferences, one on Jewish Studies in Canada, the other on the study of Canadian Jewry in 1996 and 1998 respectively. The Chair will maintain this relationship with York's Chair by holding annual joint meetings and lectures. The Chair also supports graduate student conferences, including the Interdisciplinary Studies in Religion and Culture Conference, held at Concordia University.

Institutional Bonds

Ira Robinson, President of the Association for Canadian Jewish Studies since 1994 and a founding member of the Chair's Academic Council serves as a liaison between the Chair and the Association for Canadian Jewish Studies.



Associates of the Chair

The faculty of Concordia University includes members of several departments, including Religion, History, English, Political Science, Etudes Françaises, and others who have made significant contributions to the study of Canadian Jewry.

The following is a short list of some of the scholars affiliated with the Chair.

Norman Ravvin

Chair of Canadian Jewish Studies

Department of Religion

Research: Canadian Jewish Literature
Jewish Thought and the Holocaust
Creative Writing and Memoir

Frank Chalk

Department of History

Research: Impact of the Holocaust on the
Identity of Jews in Canada and
contributions of Canadian Holocaust
Survivors to Canadian Jewish Life

Mervin Butovsky

Department of English

Research: Montreal Jewish Literature
North American Jewish Literature
Literature and the Holocaust

Norma Joseph

Department of Religion

Research: Canadian Jewish Women
Iraqi Jewish Women of Montreal
Jews and Divorce

Kurt Jonassohn

Department of Sociology and Anthropology

Research: Comparative Analysis of Genocide
and Human Rights Violations

Jack Lightstone

Department of Religion

Research: Canadian Jewish Synagogue and
Institutional Life

Michael Oppenheim

Department of Religion

Research: Issues of North American Jewish
Identity
20th Century Jewish Philosophy

Ira Robinson

Department of Religion

Research: Constitutional Documents of
Canadian Jewish Organizations
North American Jewish History

Ira Robinson (contd.)

The Immigrant Orthodox Rabbinate of
Montreal

Loren Lerner

Department of Fine Arts

Research: Women in Art
Art and the Holocaust

Steven Scheinberg

Department of History

Research: Anti-Semitism in the US and Canada
Right Wing Extremism

Bina Toledo Freiwald

Department of English

Research: Contemporary Literature
Biography and Autobiography

Sherry Simon

Humanities Program

Research: French Literature
Quebec Literature

Please visit our Web site at

www.concordia.ca/jchair

For more information, please contact the Concordia
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Jewish Studies. The Andrea and Charles Bronfman
Philanthropies generously provide ongoing funding for
the Institute's programs.*

Archival images courtesy Canadian Jewish Congress
National Archives, Montreal



The Chair has also established a Community Advisory
Board, which works together with the Academic
Council of the Chair to direct the Chair's community
outreach efforts to more effectively serve the inter-
ests of the Jewish community.

Community Advisory Board Members

Yoine Goldstein

Past President of Federation CJA

Miriam Roland

Member Board of Governors, Concordia
University

Diane Sasson

Executive Director of Auberge Shalom
pour femmes

Brahms E. Silver

Concordia alumnus and past president
Temple Emanu-El Beth Shalom